YOUNGMiNDS

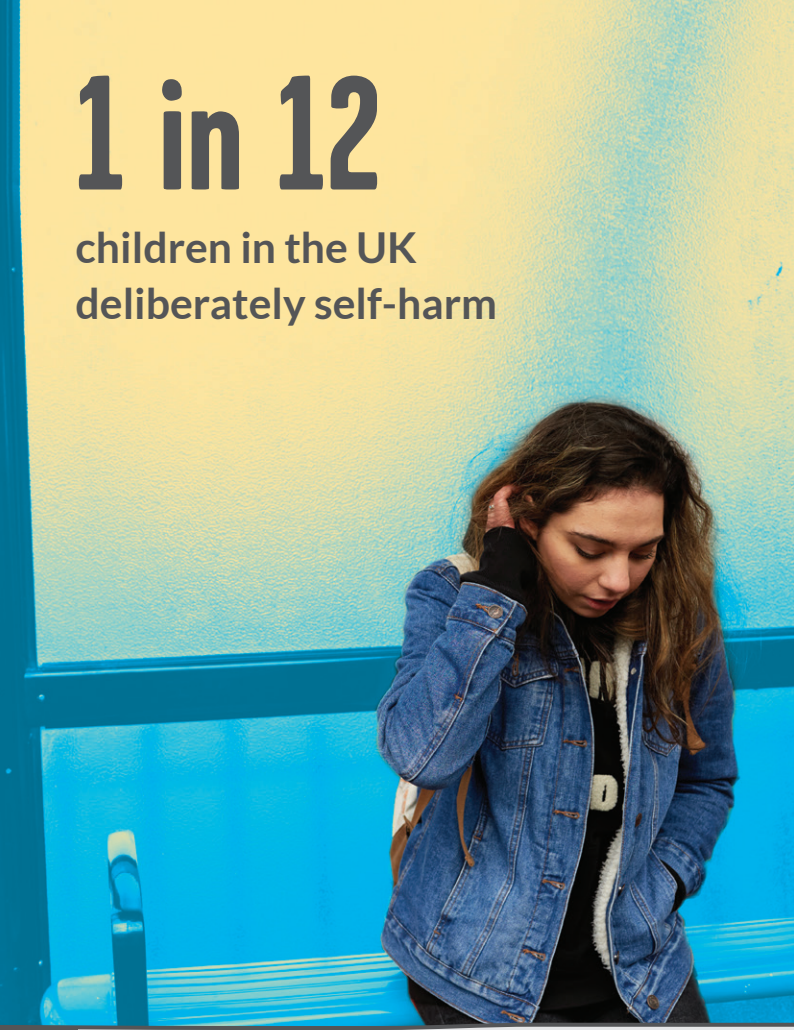


Self Harm

Your guide to self-harm and getting the help you need

1 in 12

children in the UK deliberately self-harm



YM youngminds.org.uk/self-harm

Self Harm

Self harm is a common problem that can often point to underlying issues with your mental health.

There is help out there to help you stop and also address whatever triggers are causing you to start.

In this booklet, we'll guide you through what causes people to self-harm, how to get help and how to help if you know someone who might be self-harming.



Why do people self harm?

Self-harm often starts as a result of another condition like depression or anxiety. So understanding the underlying cause is essential. But self harm can also start with no previous history of mental health problems and people do it for a whole host of reasons, including:

- to reduce tension
- to manage extreme emotional upset
- to distract them from emotional pain
- to express emotions such as hurt, anger or frustration
- to regain control over feelings or problems
- to punish themselves or others
- to receive care from others
- to identify with a peer group

Over time, self-harming can become a habit that is hard to stop. At its most extreme, self-harm can be a suicide attempt.

The dangers of self harming

In some cases the injuries or damage you do to yourself may be serious without you ever intending it.

It can also often be a sign of underlying mental health issues – and if they're not treated they could get worse too.

"I felt so bad I wanted to die... and I nearly did. Now things are different – I'm so glad to be alive"

What you can do

Identify the triggers

Self-harm can be treated – **thousands of people every year stop self-harming with the right help.**

Start by thinking about why you do it:

- What was happening when you first started?
- Is there something that triggers the urge to harm yourself?
- Do you have frightening memories or thoughts you struggle to share?
- Is there anything else that makes you feel stressed or makes you want to hurt yourself?

Dealing with stress

Stress is one of the biggest factors that make people self-harm. When a lot of problems come together, it can often seem like too much. So it's important to learn how to deal with it. There are plenty of things you can do such as:

- talk to someone to share your problem
- try meditation or mindfulness
- take regular exercise
- go for a walk
- try relaxation techniques e.g, taking slow deep breaths
- try to do something that you enjoy e.g. listen to music

25,000

young people are sent to A&E every year as a result of their injuries from self-harming

Deciding to get help

Getting help is the first step to stopping. And it starts with talking to someone.

Talk to someone you trust. It could be a friend, a teacher, a carer, a school counsellor, a parent or relative.

Talk to someone you know

It can be really hard to talk to others about it. So it might help to prepare yourself before you do:

"I find it hard to talk to other people about how I feel. They don' t understand. They think I'm seeking attention – that's the last thing I want."

- Identify who you're going to ask
- When and where will you tell them?
- Practice saying it out loud
- Picture their response

Remember – the first person you talk to may not be able to help. That's fine – it's not their fault or yours – so keep trying. The more you talk about it, the more comfortable you become and the more likely you'll find the right person.

"The psychiatrist listened and I got more say in what was happening… and he helped my mum and dad understand it."

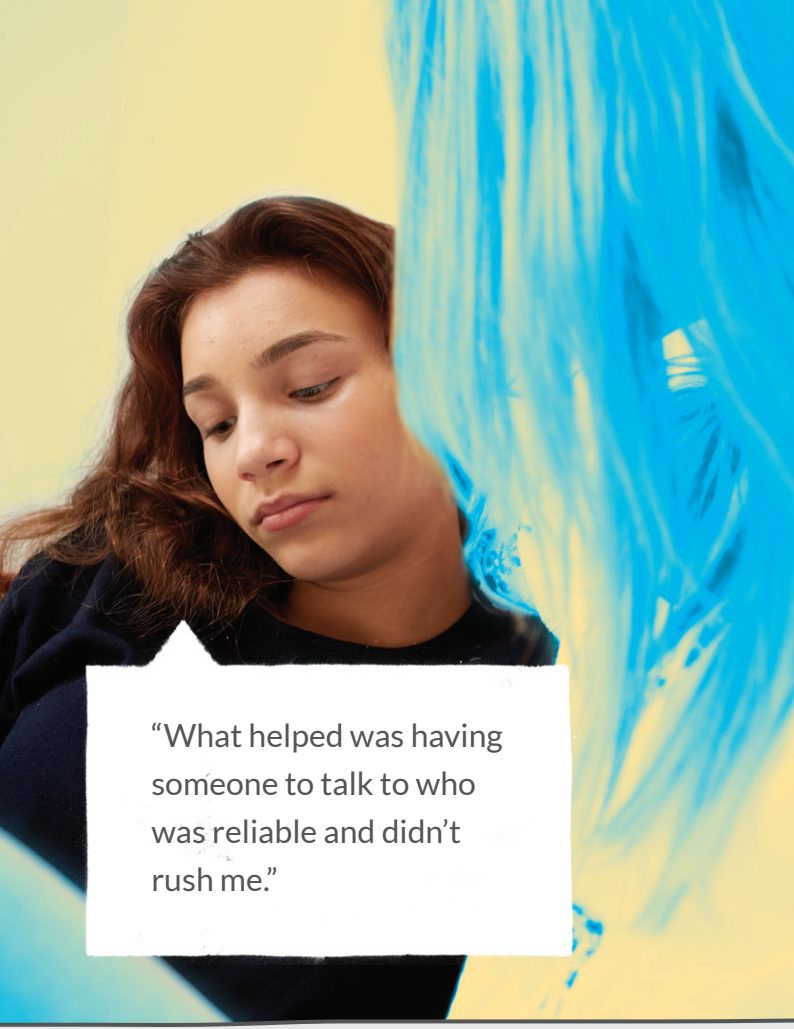
Talk to a professional

Sometimes, it's just easier to talk to someone who doesn't know you.

There are plenty of people you can talk to as well:

- Your doctor
- A school nurse
- A helpline (you'll find contact details at the back of this booklet)

All these people are there to help and they're completely confidential too. Even if you're not sure what to say, they're very experienced at talking to people just like you.


"What helped was having someone to talk to who was reliable and didn't rush me."

Think someone you know might be self harming?

Friends and family can play a huge role in helping people get the support they need – it's not always down to them to do it.

There are a few things you can do to help:

- Offer to listen
- Keep an open mind
- Help them to manage their problems
- Offer to go with them to get help
- Don't treat them any differently from normal

Remember, you don't need to understand why they self-harm. The key is simply to listen, help them find the support they need and most importantly, don't make them feel ashamed or embarrassed by it.

Where to go for help

On the next few pages, you'll find some useful websites and helplines run by experts in self-harm. They're here to help you and provide confidential support to help you tackle it.

selfharm.co.uk

Provides a safe place to talk, share stories and ask for advice.

selfinjurysupport.org.uk

Run by the Bristol Crisis Service for Women, they support girl in distress and have a text and email service too.
Text: 0780 047 2908
Mon-Fri 7am-9pm

childline.org.uk

A free, 24/7 helpline that provides counseling for children with any problem.

Helpline: 0800 1111

Text: 0800 400 222

Mon-Fri: 9:30am-9:30pm | Weekends: 11am-8pm

samaritans.org.uk

Confidential support for anyone in crisis

Helpline: 08457 90 90 90 (UK)

Text: 08457 90 91 92

Email: jo@samaritanc.org.uk

youthaccess.co.uk

Information and advice for people aged 12-25 years old.

youth2youth.co.uk

Confidential and anonymous support from young volunteers for under-19s through its helpline and online chat.
Helpline: 020 8896 3675 (Mon-Wed 6:30pm-9:30pm)

mind.org.uk

Provides mental help support and information.
Infoline: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm)
Email: info@mind.org.uk

National Self Harm Network: nshn.co.uk

Supports people who self-harm and helps to find support and alternatives to self-harming.

YM Parents Helpline

0808 802 5544

youngminds.org.uk

Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm

YoungMinds
Suite 11 Baden Place
Crosby Row
London SE1 1YW
Telephone 020 7089 5050

ymenquiries@youngminds.org.uk

youngminds.org.uk

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